

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A particulate and fluid tight vent filter seal for a sterilization container having container planar members that enclose an interior space wherein one of the container planar members is a vent planar member that is a generally flat member that has an interior surface within the interior space, an opposing exterior surface and a container vent by which sterilization media can pass through the vent planar member into the interior space of the container, and a sheet filter disposed within the interior space of the container comprising:

a vent recess having a generally arcuate cross-section formed ~~within~~ in the vent planar member by deformation of the vent planar member to create a said arcuate vent recess on the interior surface of the vent planar member which recess extends below the plane of the interior surface and also creates a corresponding generally arcuate opposing protective ridge that extends above the plane of the exterior surface of the vent planar member wherein said recess and said ridge and completely surrounding the container vent ~~wherein said vent recess has an arcuate concave surface in the vent planar member interior surface and further~~ and wherein ~~said~~ the sheet filter ~~is~~ extends over the entire container vent and said surrounding vent recess;

a gasket having a generally arcuate cross-section secured wholly within said vent recess and in contact with substantially the entire

concave surface of said vent recess ~~where~~ whereby said gasket is protected against damage; and

a generally planar filter cover that is disposed to move into engagement with the vent planer member and having a cover vent by which sterilization media can pass through said filter cover, said planar filter cover further comprising a generally arcuate convex cover ridge formed in said filter cover by deformation thereof wherein said cover ridge completely surrounds ~~the~~ said cover vent and wherein said cover ridge is coextensive with said vent recess and sized to at least partially fit into said vent recess, whereby when said vent recess and said cover ridge are aligned and said filter cover is operatively secured in place, a positive force is applied to said cover ridge forcing it toward and in engagement with said gasket in said vent recess, whereby said cover ridge is forced against said sheet filter which, in turn, is forced against said gasket whereby said cover ridge, said gasket and said vent recess form a particulate and fluid tight seal that surrounds both the container vent and said cover vent which prevents fluid from entering or leaving the sterilization container through the seal so formed.

2-4. (Canceled)

5. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 4 1 wherein said cover vent and the container vent are spaced apart a distance greater than the thickness of the filter therebetween when said filter cover is operatively secured in place whereby lateral movement of sterilization media between the container vent and said cover vent is facilitated.

6. (Currently Amended) The vent filter seal of claim 5 wherein the container vent is a pattern of holes through the ~~container~~ vent planar member and further wherein ~~said cover~~ the vent in said filter cover is a pattern of holes through said filter cover within the area defined by said cover ridge wherein the holes of the container vent and said holes of the vent in said filter cover are offset relative to each other when said filter cover is operatively secured in place.

7-14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) The vent filter seal of claim 1 wherein the vent planar member is in a removable container lid and said gasket is exposed when said filter cover is removed to change the filter.